

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0143

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS DEFENSE

FROM US REP MBFR

REF: LONDON 04802 (LIMDIS)

E.O. 11642: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: INFORMAL UK SUGGESTION ON OPTION 3

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: UNLESS IT HAS ASPECTS NOT YET EXPLAINED BY TICKELL, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO ADOPT HIS PERSONAL SUGGESTION, DESCRIBED IN LONDON 04802, TO DROP SOVIET TANKS FROM THE ALLIED PHASE I REDUCTION APPROACH. OUR REASONS FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

2. TICKELL PRESENTED HIS PROPOSAL MAINLY AS A WAY OF DEALING WITH THE ISSUE OF RESIDUAL LIMITS ON ARMAMENTS. IN PARTICULAR, HE WANTS TO ELIMINATE THE POSSIBILITY OF A LIMITATION ON WESTERN TANKS. BUT HE STILL HAS IN MIND SOME LIMITATION ON SOVIET NUCLEAR SYSTEMS.

3. HOWEVER AS THE COURSE OF RECENT TRILATERAL
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DISCUSSION ON THIS TOPIC HAS AGAIN DEMONSTRATED,

IT IS THE EFFORT TO CONTROL SOVIET NUCLEARS IN THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS WHICH RAISES THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD IN TURN SEEK TO IMPOSE LIMITS ON WESTERN TANKS. AS LONG AS LIMITATIONS ARE RESTRICTED TO ITEMS WHOSE REDUCTION IS ACTIVELY BARGAINED FOR AND SPECIFIED IN SOME WAY IN AN AGREEMENT, THAT IS TO SAY, US MANPOWER AND NUCLEAR ELEMENTS AND SOVIET MANPOWER AND TANKS, THE WEST WILL BE IN A POSITION EFFECTIVELY TO RESIST EXTENSION OF LIMITATIONS TO OTHER ARMAMENTS. BUT IF THE WEST WISHES TO LIMIT SOVIET NUCLEARS IN SOME FASHION, IT DEPARTS FROM THAT PRINCIPLE AND THE WAY IS OPEN TO EASTERN EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A LIMITATION OF SOME KIND ON WESTERN TANKS.

4. TICKELL MAY HAVE IN MIND THAT AN AGREEMENT WOULD NOT CONTAIN ANY RESIDUAL LIMITATION ON US NUCLEAR ELEMENTS AND THEREFORE AVOID COMPLETELY THE ISSUE OF ANY LIMITATIONS ON ARMAMENTS. BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT, IF WITHDRAWAL OF US NUCLEAR ELEMENTS AND MANPOWER REPRESENTS THE WESTERN PART OF A REDUCTION BARGAIN, THE US CAN ESCAPE LIMITATION ON ITS RESIDUAL NUCLEAR ELEMENTS AS WELL AS ON ITS MANPOWER.

5. TICKELL DID NOT SO STATE, BUT ONE OF HIS OBJECTIVES IS EVIDENTLY TO DECREASE THE ALLIED ASKING PRICE BY DROPPING SOVIET TANKS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE CHANCES FOR EASTERN ACCEPTANCE OF THE COMMON CEILING. BUT MUCH OF THE MILITARY, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND POLITICAL BENEFIT OF THE PROPOSED WESTERN PHASE I REDUCTIONS COMES FROM THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TANKS. TO RELINQUISH THIS OBJECTIVE WOULD DECREASE THE MILITARY BENEFITS OF AN MBFR AGREEMENT.

6. DROPPING THE TANK OBJECTIVE WOULD ELIMINATE THE MORE VERIFIABLE ELEMENT OF THE WEST'S REDUCTION OBJECTIVES.

7. THE TICKELL APPROACH WOULD ALSO HAVE THE
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TACTICAL DISADVANTAGE THAT IT COULD OPEN THE WAY FOR AN EASTERN COUNTER-PROPOSAL TO LIMIT A FIST REDUCTION AGREEMENT TO MANPOWER ONLY WITH SMALL REDUCTIONS ON AN EQUAL PERCENTAGE OR EQUAL NUMBER BASIS, AN APPROACH WHICH BOTH SOVIET REP KHLESTOV AND CZECHOSLOVAK REP MEISNER HAVE MENTIONED AS A POSSIBILITY. THE WEST WOULD THEN BE IN THE PECULIAR POSITION OF AGREEING THAT THE SOVIETS NEED INCLUDE

NO ARMAMENTS IN THEIR REDUCTIONS, BUT OF
INSISTING THAT THE WEST WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE US NU-
CLEAR ELEMENTS IN ITS REDUCTIONS, IN THE PROCESS
UNDERMINING THE OVERALL RATIONALE OF THE WESTERN
MIXED PACKAGE APPROACH.RESOR

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DEFENSE.

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